



**For immediate release
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DCR SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING ON THREE MILE RIVER WATERSHED

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) announced a public meeting for January 15, 2009, to discuss the Commonwealth's newest Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Taunton and establish a volunteer stewardship committee.

The Three Mile River Watershed ACEC covers 14,275 acres in Dighton, Norton, and Taunton and harbors a wealth of biodiversity. It is the 29th Massachusetts ACEC. The Department of Conservation and Recreation administers the ACEC program for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA).

The public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, from 7-9 p.m., at Norton Town Hall, 70 East Main St., Norton, in the 2nd floor meeting room. If necessary, the snow date will be Thursday, January 22, same time and place.

At the meeting, DCR staff members and ACEC experts will explain the ACEC designation and describe the area's resources. Meeting attendees will have an opportunity to help establish stewardship goals for the area. Interested residents, municipal staff members, and representatives of municipal boards and local or regional organizations are encouraged to attend.

"ACEC stewardship committees help bring together communities and landowners to promote environmental education, sound resource management and protection, and effective private and public coordination," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "Established ACEC committees across the state have achieved several important objectives to protect, restore, and enhance critical natural resources."

An ACEC designation protects ecosystems and fosters appreciation and stewardship of unique natural and cultural resources. The designation provides a framework to citizens, communities, and agencies to ensure the long-term preservation and management of these areas.

Committees identify and address problems, design management strategies, conduct public outreach, and implement recommendations. Committees can include interested groups and/or individuals who volunteer to help manage the resources inside the ACEC.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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The Three Mile River Watershed ACEC includes wetlands and tributaries of the Taunton River and the headwaters of the Segregansett River in Taunton. This ACEC supports 12 rare species and includes habitats for globally imperiled species and two rare communities of forested wetlands. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program mapped 95 percent of this ACEC land as core habitats. Ten public water supply wells and a public reservoir are within, or are supplied by waters flowing through, the ACEC. More than 150 historic sites and districts and numerous archaeological sites are also within the ACEC

For more information on the ACEC program, visit www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/index.htm or contact Elizabeth Sorenson, ACEC program director, at 617-626-1394 or elizabeth.sorenson@state.ma.us.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.